



**ALABAMA
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**
THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

**468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
Voice: (334)242-3184
Fax: (334)262-1083
www.ahc.alabama.gov**

1. Name of Property:

Historic Name: Camp Maragret Murray Washington/Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher

Common Name: Camp Fletcher

Preferred name for Certificate: ☐ Historic Name or ☒ Common Name

2. Location:

Address: 5150 Fletcher Road

City: McCalla

State: Alabama County: Jefferson Zip: 35022

Is the property located within the city limits? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Latitude: 33.33472 Longitude: -87.00778

Township: 20S Range: 5W Section: 13,14,23,24 USGS Quad Map: McCalla, AL

3. Owner of Property:

Name: Camp Fire Alabama

Address: 106 Oxmoor Road

City: Birmingham State: AL Zip: 35209

Telephone: 205 324 2434

Email: kfunderburk@campfire-al.org

Does the owner consent to nominating this property? ☒ Yes ☐ No

4. Person Applying for Historic Register Designation (if different from the owner):

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

5. Geographical Data (acreage of nominated property): 277.5

6. Date of Construction: July 22nd, 1926

Source of Date: A Brief History of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, 1926 to 1963: And a Biographical Sketch of Its Founder.

7. Date(s) of Alterations: Many alterations have occurred over time to existing structures.

Source of Date: Oral history and site visits

8. Physical Description

Architect/Builder:	Varies by building and structure
Contractor:	Varies by building and structure
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Pauline Fletcher- 1926; funded by GA Payne for \$2,000
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	Community Chest- The Girls' Service League/Youth Service League; Birmingham Area Council of Camp Fire; Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Fair
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	Medium
Historic Use of Property:	Convalescent Camp for African American women and children.
Current Use of Property:	Outdoor education facility, summer camp
Number of Stories:	All buildings are one story.
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	Varied- Stone, wood, concrete, concrete blocks
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	Varied- Stone, wood, concrete, concrete blocks
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	Gabled, flat
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	Shingled, asphalt
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	Poured concrete, wood, stone
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	Varied- Double hung, fixed
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	Varied- Plaster, concrete block, and wood walls, hardwood, poured concrete, and carpeted floors.
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	Varied- Some buildings have fireplaces, exterior stairs, interior doors
Number and Type of all Outbuildings: (barn, garage, gazebo/summerhouse, shed, storm shelter.)	Two small greenhouses, two pavilions, storage pods, a lean-to for lumber, a structure for archery, a separated bathroom building
General Character and surroundings: (rural, small town, commercial area, urban, etc.)	Camp is located in a semi-rural area, south of Bessemer, AL.

9. History (please use additional sheets when necessary)

Please provide a history of the property. The history should include how the property developed over time, how the property was/is used, information about the people who lived/worked there, and any significant events or activities that happened there.

1. Please see "Where the Green Grass Grows: Camp Fletcher Stands the Test of Time," by Cherri Ellis (attached to this application).
2. Please view the attached DVD containing a brief documentary on the history of Camp Fletcher.
3. Please refer to the documentary program "Bounce Around Birmingham, Episode 102" by WBRC Fox 6. Historical information on Camp Fletcher begins at the 6 minute mark.
<http://www.wbrc.com/clip/13509524/bounce-around-birmingham-102>

10. Bibliographical Reference

Please provide a list of sources you consulted to find historical information.

A Brief History of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, 1926 to 1963: And a Biographical Sketch of Its Founder. Birmingham, Ala: publisher not identified, 1964. Print.

Watts, Carrie E. (August 1, 1948) "History and development of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, with emphasis on the 1947 program" Master's Thesis, Atlanta University School of Social Work. ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library. Paper 704.

Oral histories

Site visits

11. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

Attach sketched floor plan. If the property includes more than one building, submit a site plan showing the locations, dates of construction, and uses of the buildings.

12. Attach a map showing the location of the property.

You can use www.google.com/maps

13. PHOTOGRAPHS:

Images are essential to the review process. Submit current, good quality digital images on a CD/DVD. Interior and exterior photos are required. Good quality 4" x 6" photos will be accepted, but do NOT staple or tape photographs. All images will become the property of the AHC and will not be returned.

14. REMINDER:

Along with this completed application, include attachments for Items 11, 12, and 13 and send them to:

Alabama Historical Commission
Attn: Hannah Garmon
468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

For additional questions contact
Hannah Garmon at 334-230-2644 or Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov

Physical Description

Building Name:	Rosa Windham
Construction date:	July 22 nd , 1926
Architect/Builder:	T.C. and B.L. Windham, M.W. Goodson, Robert Ashe
Contractor:	T.C. Windham
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Margaret and Murray Washington
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	- Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher - Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	- Good
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	- Medium - Exterior: High - Interior: Low
Historic Use of Property:	- House Camp Directors Office - Camper Housing - First Dining Hall
Current Use of Property:	Camp Office
Number of Stories:	1 (raised off ground)
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	Wood Building, Stone Staircase, Wood Frame
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	Wood Building, Stone Staircase, Wood Frame
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	Gable
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	Asphalt
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	Brick, Concrete Block
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- Double-hung Glass and Wood Windows - Double-hung Glass and Metal Windows
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Plaster Walls, Carpeted Floors in main area - Tile Floors in kitchen
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Wood Building with Stone Fireplace - Plaster walls, Carpeted Floor in main area

Physical Description

Building Name:	Juliette-Bradford Memorial Lodge
Construction date:	1935
Architect/Builder:	- Constructed by funds raised by Birmingham Federation of Negro Womens Club
Contractor:	- N/A
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	- Camp Margaret Murray Washington
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	- Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher - Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Good
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	High
Historic Use of Property:	Dining Hall
Current Use of Property:	Dining hall with updated fixtures/fridge
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	- Wood - Wood Frame - Stone
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	- Wood - Wood Frame - Stone
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	Gabled, Flat
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	- Asphalt/unknown
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	- Poured Concrete, Concrete Blocks, Wood, Stone
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- Screened, Fixed Windows - Metal Screened Windows
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Wooden and Plaster Walls - Poured Concrete Floor
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Stone Fire Place

Physical Description

Building Name:	The Flag pole
Construction date:	1936
Architect/Builder:	- Highland Social Club donated the 75 ft. Flagpole
Contractor:	N/A
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Margaret Murray Washington
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	- Camp Pauline bray Fletcher - Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Excellent
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	High
Historic Use of Property:	Gave camp the opportunity to proudly fly Old Glory during camp season
Current Use of Property:	Flying Flag
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	Metal
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	Metal
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	N/A
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	N/A
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	- Poured concrete and metal
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	N/A
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	N/A
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	N/A

Physical Description

Building Name:	ACIPCO Hut
Construction date:	July, 1939
Architect/Builder:	- American Cast Iron Pipe Company
Contractor:	- ACIPCO Colored Employees
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Margaret Murray Washington
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	- Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher - Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Good
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	High
Historic Use of Property:	Hosting up to 40 campers
Current Use of Property:	Girl's residential/overnight cabin
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	Wood, Wood Frame
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	Wood, Wood Frame
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	Gabled, Hipped
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	Asphalt
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	Concrete Block, Wood, Poured Concrete, Stone
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- Fixed, Screened - Metal, Screened
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Wood Floors, Ceilings, Walls
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Wood

Physical Description

Building Name:	Stockham Hut
Construction date:	1949
Architect/Builder:	Employees of Stockham Pipe and Fitting Company
Contractor:	Lt. Richard Stockham
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Margaret Murray Washington
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Good
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	Medium
Historic Use of Property:	Log cabin that served as camp office and residence for campers. Also sleeping porches on front and back.
Current Use of Property:	The building is currently used for storage of camp equipment
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	- Wood with brick - Log cabin with fireplace
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	- Wood, Brick Fireplace
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	- Gable
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	- Asphalt, Historical Covering
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	- Concrete Blocks, Wood
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- Double Hung - Glass and Wood Windows
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Plaster Walls, Wood Parlor Floor
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Brick Fireplace at Center of Building

Physical Description

Building Name:	Pinecrest/ Mary Nations Building/ Discovery Cabin
Construction date:	1929 1954
Architect/Builder:	
Contractor:	Funds donated by principals and teachers of Birmingham Schools
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Margaret Murray Washington
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	- Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher - Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Ruinous. Original structure destroyed in 1953 due to structural weaknesses. Replaced with 2 sleeping cabins.
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	Low
Historic Use of Property:	To accommodate 36 campers and 4 staff members
Current Use of Property:	New cabin built in 1954. 1 st to have showers and bathrooms. Currently a sleeping cabin for campers.
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	- Wood Frame - Wood
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	- Wood Frame - Wood
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	- Hipped Roof
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	- Asphalt/unknown
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	- Poured Concrete - Concrete Blocks
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- Screened Windows, fixed - Metal Screen Mesh
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Wood Floors, Wood Walls, Beamed Ceilings - Unfinished
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors,	- Restrooms with showers and toilets

molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Wooden, screened doors
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Physical Description

Building Name:	The General Store
Construction date:	1958
Architect/Builder:	N/A
Contractor:	N/A
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Good
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	High
Historic Use of Property:	Canteen for selling nick knacks and toiletries
Current Use of Property:	Store for campers and guests to buy food, drinks and camp merchandise
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	- Concrete Blocks, Wood
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	- Concrete blocks, Wood
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	- Gable, Overhang
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	- Asphalt
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	- Poured Concrete
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- Double Hung, Screened
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Concrete Floor, Concrete Block Walls
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Concrete floor with large serving area with windows.

C

Physical Description

Building Name:	The Swimming Pool and Pool House
Construction date:	1954
Architect/Builder:	- funded from donation drive after Shade's Creek was deemed unsafe for swimming
Contractor:	N/A
Original Owner / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher
Subsequent Owners / Dates of Occupancy:	Camp Fire Alabama
Physical Condition: (excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous)	Good
Remaining Historic Fabric: (high, medium, low)	High
Historic Use of Property:	Swimming of Campers and Local Residents
Current Use of Property:	Swimming for Campers and Events
Number of Stories:	1
Exterior Historic Construction Material(s): (brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, wood-frame, other.)	- Concrete and Concrete Blocks, Wood
Current Exterior Covering: (asbestos, brick, concrete, log, metal, stone, stucco, vinyl, wood-frame, other.)	- Concrete and Concrete Blocks, Wood
Roof Configuration: (gable, flat, hip, mansard, pyramidal, shed.)	- Flat
Roof Finish Materials: (asphalt, built-up, composite, metal, slate, tar, tile, wood, other, or unknown).	- Asphalt
Foundation Material: (brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, wood, other or unknown).	- Concrete Block, Poured Concrete
Window Type: (awning, casement, double hung, fixed, hopper, and jalousie) Materials: (metal, synthetic, and wood)	- N/A - Screened Windows on Doors
Interior Materials: (finishes, walls, ceiling, floors, etc.)	- Concrete Floor, Concrete Block Walls
Interior Detail: (stairs, fireplaces, mantels, doors, molding, built-in furniture, etc.)	- Screened Doors to Outside - Wood Doors

Camp Fire Alabama
106 Oxmoor Road
Birmingham, AL 35209
205-324-2434
Kfunderburk@campfire-al.org



2/5/2018

Hannah Garmon
Alabama Historical Commission
468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900



Dear Ms. Garmon,

For nearly a century, the story of Camp Fletcher has been one of quiet perseverance and compassion; but for a moment in time the camp was the setting of a news story that swept the nation and served as the catalyst for a groundbreaking piece of civil rights legislation.

Pauline Fletcher was a remarkable woman, and a monument to her stands at the entrance to Kelly Ingram Park in Downtown Birmingham. The first African-American Registered Nurse in the state of Alabama, Mrs. Fletcher wanted to build a recreational camp that would be open to the humblest black child. To realize her dream, the fiercely determined Mrs. Fletcher solicited support from family members, organizations, businesses, and even mortgaged her own home (which she subsequently lost in the Great Depression). Camp Fletcher opened its gates in 1926 and has been in continuous operation since.

Camp Fletcher was thrust into the national spotlight on the night of June 10th, 1948 when the Klan came calling. Camp Fletcher was hosting a Girl Scout leadership training that included both white and black leaders. Late that night, the women were terrorized by as many as a hundred hooded Klansmen who were infuriated that women of both races were sharing the same dining and living facilities and were even allegedly seen together in town arm-in-arm buying supplies and carrying out their daily business.

The raid was headline news across the country and widespread community outrage led directly to the Alabama Legislature passing the first anti-masking law in the nation after similar laws had failed passage in other southern legislatures.

Today Camp Fletcher operates as a non-profit outdoor education center welcoming children of all ethnicities and income levels from throughout Central Alabama. Owned and operated by Camp Fire Alabama, the camp strives to honor Pauline Fletcher's legacy by designing and implementing programming to help children acquire the necessary tools for personal development and growth while in an outdoor environment.

Thank you for considering Camp Fletcher's application for addition to the state historical registry.

Best regards,
Kayleigh Funderburk
Camp Fire Alabama
205-324-2434
kfunderburk@campfire-al.org

THE RESOLUTION OF HONORS:

In behalf of the Late Ms. Pauline Bray Fletcher
Jefferson County Historical Commission

(est. by act of Legislature, 1971)

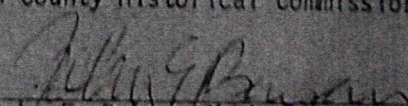
P.O. Box 2261

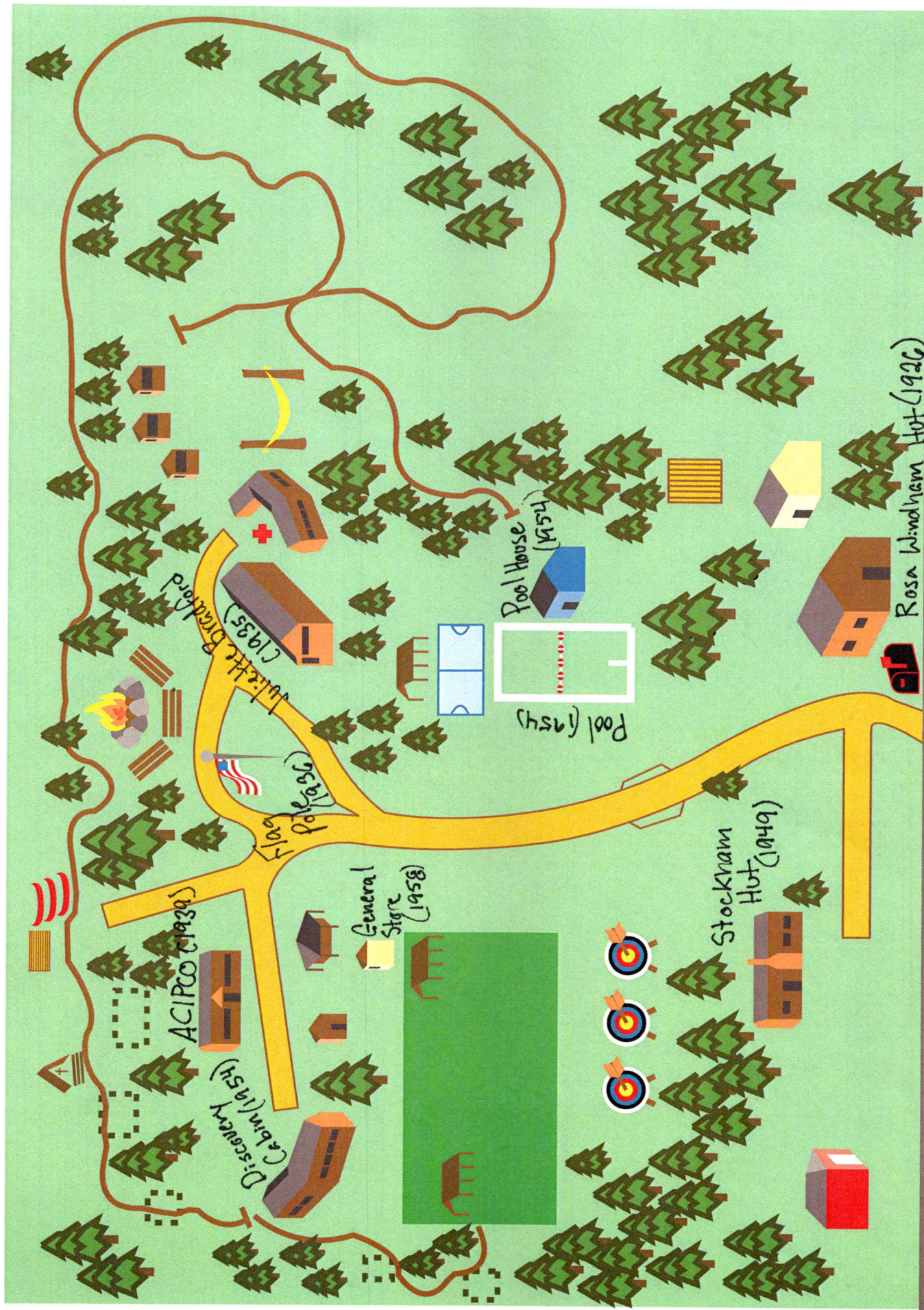
Birmingham, Alabama 35202



RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS: Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, a native of the State of Georgia, became the first black Registered Nurse in Alabama, and;
- WHEREAS: Developed intense interest in the health and the conditions in which many underprivileged and deprived people lived, and;
- WHEREAS: She observed the high incidence of tuberculosis among her people during the 1920's, and;
- Nursed a number of youths and adults who were victims of unhealthy living conditions, and preventable diseases, and;
- Became impressed with an indomitable spirit that a fresh-air camp away from the crowded city would help alleviate some of the suffering and disease among many unfortunate, alienated people living in the ghettos of the industrial City of Birmingham, and;
- WHEREAS: Almost penniless herself, she set about soliciting funds from compassionate whites of the community, and from her own people, to purchase land for a fresh-air camp, and;
- WHEREAS: Unsuccessful in raising sufficient funds to make the purchase, she mortgaged her home which she never redeemed, and purchased fifty-seven (57) acres in the Shades Valley area, twelve (12) miles south of Bessemer, Alabama, in 1926, and;
- WHEREAS: Camp Fletcher, which was begun fifty-two (52) years ago, has served more than seventy-eight (78) thousand campers, many of whom were underprivileged, and to the present time have had no other camp experience except that gained at Camp Fletcher, and;
- WHEREAS: The Fletcher-Tuggle Memorial Committee, Incorporated, proposes to erect a statue in memory of Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher in the Kelly Ingram Park in downtown Birmingham.
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Jefferson County Historical Commission endorse this project which is significant to the history of Birmingham and grant to the Fletcher-Tuggle Memorial Committee, Incorporated, whatever cooperation and support the Commission finds possible.
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Fletcher-Tuggle Memorial Committee, Incorporated, and that a copy be filed in the records of the Jefferson County Historical Commission.


John E. Bryan, Chairman
Birmingham, Alabama September 26, 1978



← FLETCHER ROAD →

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher (Not to scale)

Lou George Loop

Property Line

Fletcher Road

Rosa Windham
(1926)

Swimming
Pool (1954)

Juliette Bradford
(1935)

garden

Jackham (1949)

general
Store (1958)

Pine Crest
(1929)

ACIPCO
(1939)

Flag Pole (1936)

Shades Creek

front





Sign in

Pocahontas Rd

Shades Creek

Pocahontas Rd

Bluff Ridge Rd

Bluff Ridge Rd

Bluff Ridge

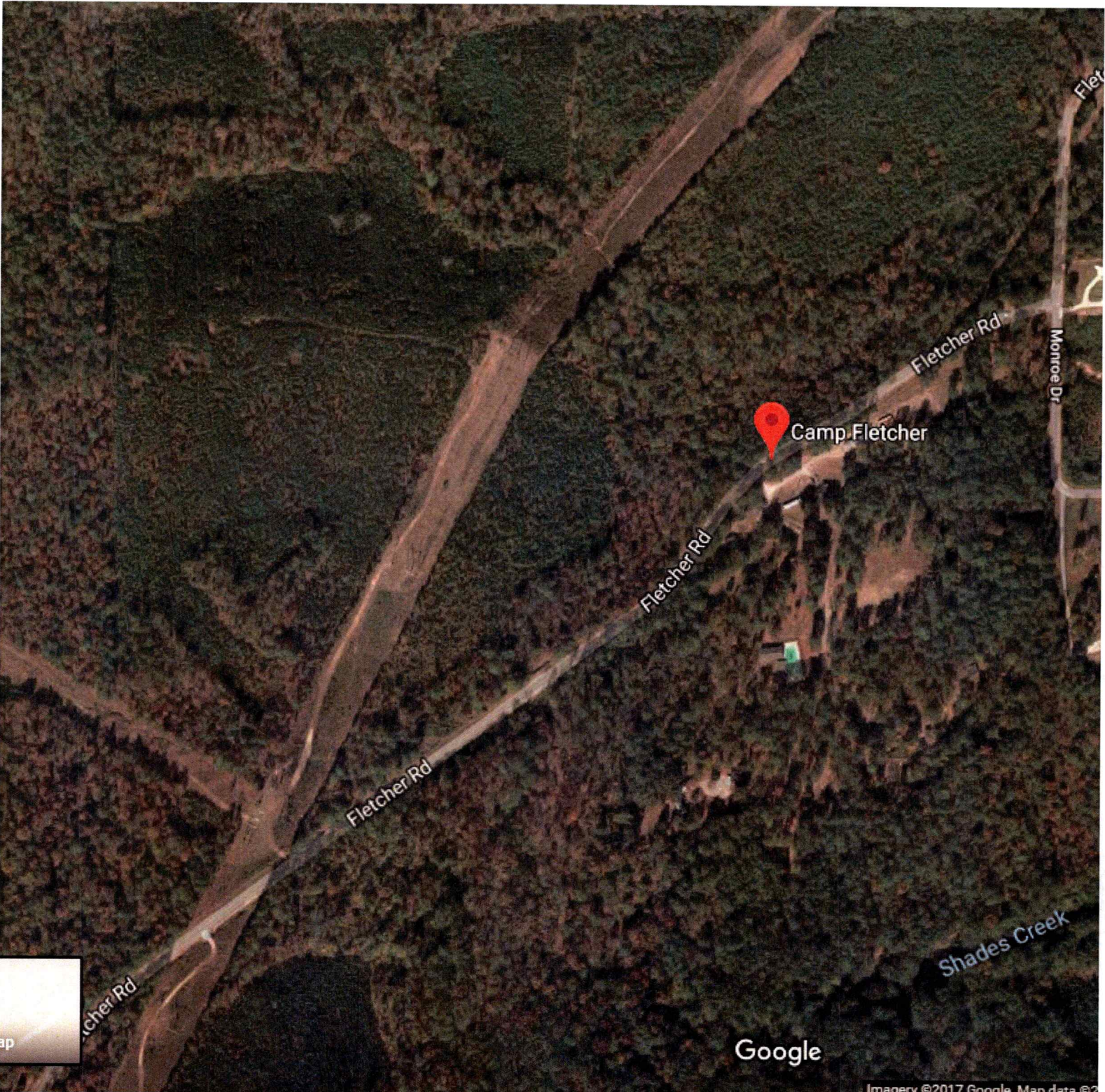


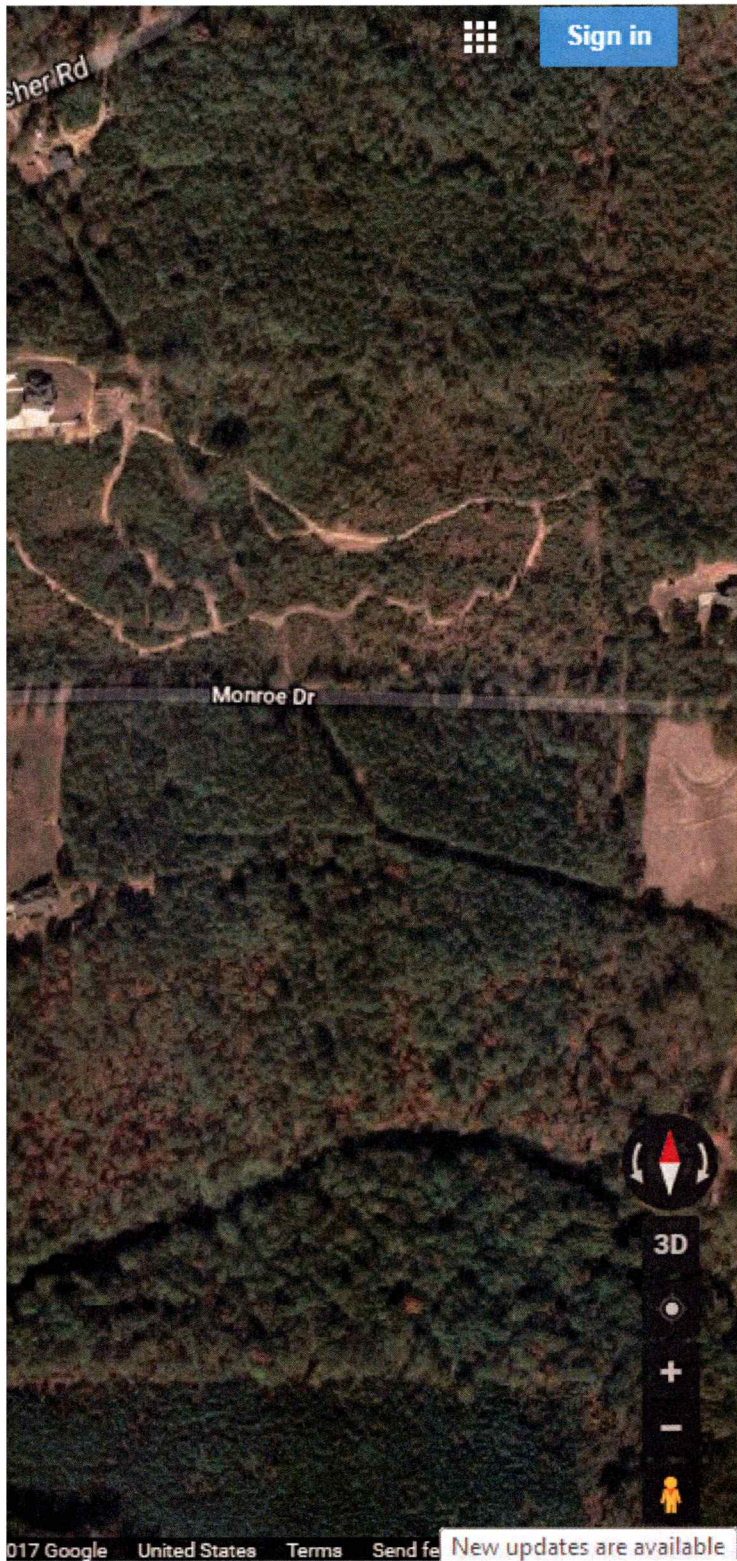
United States

Terms

Send feedback

2000 ft






8-1-1948

History and development of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, with emphasis on the 1947 program

Carrie E. Watts
Atlanta University

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HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAMP PAULINE BRAY FLETCHER,
BESSEMER, ALABAMA, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE 1947 PROGRAM

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

CARRIE E. WATTS

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AUGUST 1948

R:1-111
P:32

PREFACE

This study is an attempt to give the historical background of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher with emphasis on the present program. The data is limited to the camping period of 1947.

The writer wishes to thank Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher for her kindness and helpfulness in making it possible for her to collect data on the camp. She also wishes to thank Miss Phyllis Dews, the Director of Negro Girl Scouts, Atlanta, Georgia; Mr. Joseph Paul Jones, Birmingham, Alabama, who was responsible for the diagram of Camp Fletcher; and Mrs. Mildred Johnson and other directors of agencies using the camp, for their cooperation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to discover the factors responsible for the origin and development of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher and its facilities and to show the service which it is rendering to Negroes of Alabama.

Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, and the agencies utilizing the facilities there. The agencies are (1) the Girl Scouts, (2) the Baptist Women's State Convention jointly with the State Missionary Union (white) (sponsoring a Religious Training Camp for Negro boys and girls, (3) the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, (4) the 4-H Club, (5) the Young Women's Christian Association (sponsoring a Y-Teen Camp), and (6) the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel (sponsoring the Southeastern Bible School).

This study is limited to the program offered in 1947. The method of procedure has been such that program evaluation has been impossible.

Method of Procedure

The material for this study was collected by brief visits to the camp, interviews with the director and founder, Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, and with individual camp directors, with the chairman of the camp committee, and published and unpublished documents.

Historical Development of Camping

Camping as we know it today is a relatively modern character building agency which received its impetus from the coming of the automobile.

In the 80's when Nessmuck wrote his little book 'Woodcraft' he treated camping and 'roughing it' as synonymous terms. Camping at that time was the sport of the hunter, the fisherman, or the hardy lover of the open endured to discomfort. Rarely did the family, as

a whole venture forth to vacation under the canvas. The journey to any secluded or attractive camping ground could only be made in horse drawn vehicles. Roads were muddy or filled with ruts, and to travel upon them was a slow tedious experience....

In 1881, Mr. Ernest Balch established 'Camp Chicorna' for well-to-do boys. In 1885, Mr. Summer F. Dudley, a business man who was interested in the work of the Young Men's Christian Association, took a small group of boys to Orange Lake near Newburgh, New York, for a short camping period....

These were the pioneers of the general camping movement that has since taken place both in organized camping and in family or individual camping. During this time many parents believed that night air was poisonous and that to get wet was dangerous. But the boys who went to camp came back to their homes brown, healthy and filled with vigor and enthusiasm. These examples caused other parents to venture to allow their boys to go to camp in succeeding seasons.¹

Many a person has gone into the woods tired, discouraged, and weary of the strenuous life which society demands of him, remained there a few weeks in the fresh air and solitude to return to his home a more calm and serene person, ready to laugh at the discouragements which a few weeks before had made him feel that life was not worthwhile.

The dearth of recreational facilities for the Negro boys and girls of Alabama and the recognized need for a place where they, too, might be free to enjoy the sunshine, fresh air, and open spaces which are so desirable, led in 1926, to the founding of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher.

¹Dillon Wallace, The Camper's Handbook (New York, 1936), p. 6.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAMP PAULINE BRAY FLETCHER

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher was established in 1926 by the Nurses Association of Birmingham, Alabama, in cooperation with a group of club women motivated by the desire to provide for the Negro Youth a healthful recreational camp within the reach of the humblest child.¹

This organization was incorporated, under the name "Girls Service League," as a tax-free social agency. Responsibility for this work goes to the prominent Negro leader, Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, who came to Birmingham in 1906 to assume charge of the Children's Home for Negroes Hospital of that city. In 1919, Mrs. Fletcher was employed by the Anti-Tuberculosis Association as County Nurse, under Miss Bertha C. Clement, a white woman. It was through this association with Miss Clement, who, at that time, was directing the work of the Anti-Tuberculosis Association and also founder of a "Kiddie Camp" on Shades Mountain, that Mrs. Fletcher became convinced of the imperative need of a camp for underprivileged Negro children.²

As there were no camps for Negroes in Alabama, Mrs. Fletcher became active in trying to interest the citizenry of Birmingham, Alabama in sponsoring a camp for Negro Youth. In 1924, she visited Camp Elwema in New York, and while there she became friendly with Miss Elizabeth W. Martin, Director of Elwema, who bequeathed to Mrs. Fletcher the name Girls' Service League. While on this trip, Mrs. Fletcher attended the meeting of the Graduate Nurses Association, which was convening at Buckrow Beach, Virginia. Upon the recommendations made by the nurses at this convention, Mrs. Fletcher, on her return to Birmingham, made a report of her findings, which further revealed to the nurses of Birmingham the need for a camp, and it was this report that inspired

¹Girls' Service League, Inc., n.d. (Unpublished Pamphlet).

²Interview with Pauline Bray Fletcher, Camp Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, March 3, 1948.

the nurses to undertake the establishment of a camp.¹

Sites were surveyed in all sections of Jefferson County until, in 1925, the present location, in Shades Valley, was found, and 57½ acres of rolling wooded land were purchased. A committee of the Girls' Service League launched a financial drive, with all members participating, and the sum of \$750.00 was raised as part of the purchase price of \$2,000.00 for the site. Contributions from friends and organizations were responsible for the remainder of the \$2,000.00.

Camp Fletcher is located twelve miles southeast of Bessemer, Alabama, in Shades Valley. It consists at the time of this study of 137 acres of beautiful rolling, wooded country. Additional acreage was acquired by bartering timber taken off the original 57½ acres.²

The physical surroundings of the camp include a variety of trees, birds and flowers indigenous to the area. There are tall, tapering pine trees with pine cones the size of pineapples, so spaced as to intersperse sunshine and shade in just the proper proportions. Big Shade Creek, with its rock strewn bed and its natural three depth levels of three feet, five feet and eight feet.

There are at Camp Fletcher six well constructed, neat, clean and well-screened huts, donated by friends of the camp. In 1926, Mrs. Fletcher personally solicited lumber from every lumber yard in Jefferson County with which to begin the construction of the huts, and that year marks the beginning of Camp Margaret Murray Washington, as it was then called in honor of Mrs. Margaret Murray Washington, wife of Booker T. Washington, and an outstanding worker in the Colored Women's Clubs. However, in 1942 the Service

¹Letter from T. L. Hale, Assistant Director, Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, April 7, 1948.

²Interview with Pauline Bray Fletcher, op. cit.

League decided to change the name of the camp to Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher because of the sacrifices which Mrs. Fletcher had made in making the camp possible.¹

Living Quarters

The Rose Windham Hut.--A hut 60' by 30' which includes the quarters of the care-taker in addition to housing twelve girls and one staff member, was donated by the late Mr. T. C. Windham as a memorial to his daughter Rose. With the completion of the hut, July 22, 1926, the camp was opened for operation.²

The Oaks.--In 1927, Mrs. Fletcher mortgaged her own property, which she subsequently lost during the depression, to finance the building of "The Oaks," a five-room hut. This hut affords sleeping quarters for campers and the head-cook.³

Pine Crest.--In 1929, the principals and teachers of Birmingham's Negro schools financed the building of Pine Crest, which affords sleeping accommodations for 36 campers and four staff members.⁴

The Juliette Bradford Memorial Lodge.--In 1935, the Birmingham Federation of Negro Women's Clubs financed the building of the Juliette Bradford Memorial Lodge in honor of the late Juliette Bradford, a teacher and a civic worker of Birmingham. In this lodge is adequate room for a large kitchen, pantry, living quarters for the assistant director, who is always a man, and a spacious dining-room.

The Acipco Hut.--In 1939, the employees of the American Cast Iron and

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

Pipe Company donated the Acipco Hut. This hut accommodates 36 campers and four counselors.

The Stockham Lodge.--In 1947, Lieutenant Richard Stockham, U.S.A., gave \$2,714.00 which is being used to build a log cabin with a rock foundation as combinedly, a permanent home for Mrs. Fletcher and Administration Hall. The front and back porches will be used as sleeping quarters when needed. This lodge has not been completed.

Water Supply.--As has been previously mentioned, Big Shades Creek, flowing through the middle of the camp site among the beautiful pines, makes a most delightful place for swimming, wading, and boating. Because it is a continually running stream, it is said by health inspectors not to need purifying. However, as an extra precaution, this water is chlorinated at the beginning of each camping season.¹

Water for drinking purposes is pumped from three wells. The first of these wells was donated in 1928 by Professor A. H. Parker and the faculty of Parker High School. This well is 90 feet deep and is located near the Rose Windham Hut. The second well was donated in 1937 by the County Teachers' Association of Jefferson County, of which Professor B. M. Montgomery was president. It is 106 feet deep and is located just outside the kitchen door. The third well was drilled in 1943 and paid for with money which was accumulated by the Girls' Service League. It is 131 feet deep and is located between Acipco Hut and Pine Crest.²

The camp boasts an improvised shower system. This consists of an enclosure made of up-ended six feet logs. A five-gallon sprinkler is fastened to the top of the logs. The water for the shower comes out of a fifty gallon can heated over an open fire near the enclosure.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Latrines.--There are eight deep-pit latrines scattered in groups of two's at convenient places over the camp site. They are kept sanitary and fly-proof by keeping the seats tightly covered, by using a chemical preparation, and by scrubbing the floors daily.¹

Outside each latrine are placed soap, paper towels, and a four gallon drum of water.²

Lighting facilities.--There is no modern facility for lighting the camp. Three huge kerosene lanterns hang from the ceiling of the dining hall, and a lighted lantern is hung at each latrine. Lanterns are also used for lighting the cabins.³

Kitchen.--The kitchen of Camp Fletcher is as modern and well equipped as it can be without the use of electricity or gas. A large range is used for cooking. Flour, lard and such foods are kept in metal containers in a large pantry. Meats and perishable foods are kept in an ice-box which holds six-hundred pounds of ice.⁴

Dining Room.--The dining-room is a spacious room, so built as to be used for other activities when necessary. It has low overhanging eaves, and the sides are made of weather-board high enough so that it is protected in rainy weather. This room has a capacity for seating 110 campers. Each table may be set to accommodate as many as ten campers at a single meal.⁵

Garbage Disposal.--Wire baskets are used as incinerators in disposing

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

of burnable garbage. Tin cans are flattened and buried.¹

Fire Prevention.--Modern fire extinguishers, buckets of sand and water, and a long pole at the end of which is attached a jute sack are placed near each hut to be used in case of fire.²

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION

The machinery of administration is set up in all of its detail before the campers arrive at camp. The goal of those staff members responsible for carrying out the administration should be to have the operation so smooth that it never at any point overshadows the camp program or becomes so rigid that it limits the program. This kind of administration never 'just happens,' it is the result of careful planning, much unobtrusive hand work, and strong conviction on the part of all staff and committee members that the camp exists for the campers.

The plans for the first day of each encampment are made in full detail, so that when the campers arrive they feel welcome and know that their camping is to begin at once.¹

The following criteria might be used by the administration in preparing for the camp's program:

Is a youth safe? Are the health requirements for campers, counselors, cooks and the whole personnel of the camp adequate? Has the camp adequate provisions to prevent or to care for possible illness and accidents? Is the physical environment and equipment adequate? Is the camp program aiding in developing hygienic habits of living? Does the camp enable the boy or girl to keep well?

Does the camp furnish favorable opportunity for developing, through satisfying practice, the equalities of a good citizen? Are the camps providing opportunities for initiative, obedience to authority?

Is courteous consideration of the rights and obligations of others a part of everyday living? Is there a kind of high joyous seriousness in the spirit of the camp? Are the counselors genuine? What kind of talk goes on in camp when campers and counselors are just talking? Is the program of activities well planned? Does the camp provide for individual differences of interests? Is there well-regulated freedom and attractive activity free from hurry, strain, worry and envy? Can the camper get satisfaction out of worthwhile activity well done, rather than by surpassing somebody? Does the camp provide new or supplementary outdoor experiences? Does the camper have new experiences with flowers, birds, bugs, trees, and open sky? Are these experiences guided enough but not too much? Do the campers develop a larger repertory of sports in which they can participate with increasing skill and satisfaction? Is the camper helped to get out of the 'dub' class and into some activity? Does the camp foster the mental and emotional attitude of seeking, knowing and understanding the beautiful? This beauty may be in generous, courteous, helpful acts, in music, dramatics, in the rising sun.

What is the spiritual attitude of the camp? Is it free from cynicism? Is there a reverence for the true, the beautiful and the good?

¹Girl Scouts National Organization, The Established Camp Book (New York), p. 274.

Is there serious guidance in helping the camper to think through the problems that confront him? Is the camp a happy place? Is there wholesome comradeship free from sentimentality? Is there one specific person in camp responsible for the camper, asleep or awake, and who is that person?¹

Using these criteria as the basis for judging the effectiveness of a camp program, this study will try to describe the program of Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher and show just how nearly it meets these criteria.

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher is sponsored by the Girls' Service League, Incorporated, which comprises fifty of the leading Negro men and women of Birmingham, Alabama. This body is governed by a Constitution and By-Laws, as follows:

Constitution

Section I. The Girls Service League, Incorporated, realizing the necessity of regulated operation of its camp, proposes the following Constitution and By-Laws for the purpose of maintaining the camp at its highest point of efficiency.

Section II. The camp shall be opened during camping season to all school children and adults of our group who may wish to take advantage of its accommodations for the purpose of picnics and camping.

Section III. The facilities of the camp shall be especially offered for the accommodations for club groups of both girls and boys who will follow the camp schedule that will be published each year by the camp director.

Section IV. Whenever the camp schedule will permit churches, Sunday schools and other organizational and institutional groups may give picnics at the camp provided these groups will consult the camp director far enough in advance to prohibit too much congestion on the grounds at one time.

Section V. Since the camp is owned and controlled by the Girls' Service League, Incorporated and is also a Community Chest Agency, the main purpose of the camp shall be to provide wholesome environment for the development of physical, moral, religious, and emotional well being of

¹
Phillip Seman, "Camping in Southern California," Recreation, February, 1948, p. 512.

the members of our group.¹

By-Laws

Article I. Name

Section I. The name of the camp shall always be 'Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher' in honor of its founder and organizer. And she shall be the camp director as long as she is active and after which time she shall be Camp Director Emeritus.

Article II. Special Days

Section I. Ample provisions are to be made for the celebration of the following days during each year:

- a. Annual Camp Day.....A Sunday in April
- b. Camp Opening Day.....June 1st
- c. National Flag Day.....June 14th
- d. Founders Day.....June 22nd
- e. City and County Principals Day in August
- f. Visitors Day for White Friends in August.

Article III. Camp Fees

Section I. A regular camp fee will be charged for all campers.

Section II. Since the camp is a Community Chest Agency, reduction may be made in the weekly charge to underprivileged children sent out by the Community Chest or recommended by any other Chest agencies.

Section III. Board and lodging may be counted as payment in part of the salaries of the workers at the camp during camping seasons.²

The planning of the camp program for the camping season is done by the Camp Committee in collaboration with the Camp Director and sponsoring agencies.

The president of the League appoints different members to serve at various times on committees responsible for a special phase of the camp program. These committees are usually discharged as soon as the specified work on hand has been completed. This serves to guarantee that every member, at some time, will have charge of some piece of work which he is particularly equipped to do, thus being afforded an opportunity to get first hand information about the administration of the camp. While Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher

¹Constitution and By-Laws of Girls' Service League, Incorporated, n.d.

²Ibid.

has its overall Camp Committee, each organization using the facilities at the camp brings with it its own camp committee, camp director, camp counselors, and program.

Records.--The Campers' records as permanently filed on the scene have not been studied over a period of years, nor have facilities been provided for making particular use of them. Each agency, however, keeps its own records, which are taken away at the close of its camping season.

Health and safety measures.--A room at Rose Windham Hut is used to isolate campers who become ill during their stay at Camp Fletcher. The matron is a registered nurse and visitation arrangements are made with a doctor nearby whose home is in Bessemer. The Campers and staff alike are required to present a certificate of recent physical examination before arrival at camp.

The water-front director is an expert swimmer, has been graduated from an aquatic school, and has her Red Cross Life Saving Certificate.

A qualified dietitian prepares the menu. At the head of each table is a counselor, who serves the meals and seeks to develop proper table manners.

The following serves as an example of the menu served at Camp Fletcher:

Menu

Breakfast:

Hot Rolls	Cereal	Fruit	Sausage	Grits
Apple Sauce	Coffee or Milk			

Dinner:

Fricassee Chicken	Rice	Vegetable Salad	
Green Beans and Potatoes	Corn Bread	Iced Tea	Dessert

Supper:

Weiners	Mustard and Kraut	Potato Salad	Lemonade ¹
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¹Letter from Mildred Johnson, Field Director, Girl Scouts Council, Birmingham, Alabama, April 7, 1948.

Maintenance Staff.--This staff is furnished by Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher and serves all agencies using the camp. The staff consists of the over-all director, the assistant director, the dietitian, the water-front director, nurse, cooks and caretaker.

Finances.--The regular fee at the camp is \$7.00 per week for each camper. However, since this is a Community Chest Agency, reductions may be made in the weekly charge to underprivileged children referred by any other Chest Agency.

CHAPTER IV

AGENCIES USING CAMP PAULINE BRAY FLETCHER AND THEIR PROGRAMS

The agencies using Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher realize that group work is of the essence in all phases of camp life.

Slavson's chapter on "Group Work in Camp Life" expresses the ideals towards which the camp professes to strive.

Of particular importance to healthy character development is the group life in camp. Here, more than anywhere outside of the immediate family, the child has an opportunity for an intimate living situation with children and adults. He makes adaptations within himself so as to meet group requirements. He learns through necessity to curb himself in his indulgence. If he fails in this the group exerts pressures and imposes standards of behavior in a direct but natural way. Because of this, and because of the satisfactions he gets from a total camp situation, the child's aggressions and antagonisms can be redirected and sublimated in everyday work and living. He does not feel hemmed in. A good camp program gives each camper the satisfaction of achievement, recognition and status, as a result of which he adopts constructive ways of behaving and modifies his attitudes along socially acceptable patterns.

Democratic control of camp routines is a part of good camping. Camps can be training grounds for democratic participation, responsibility, and cooperation....Camping, being a combination of living and recreation, should not be too difficult or too involved....

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the free camp life is the unrestricted communication among the campers and with the staff....In camp it is possible to have freedom of verbal expression without annoyance to adults and other campers. Summer camping is more than fresh air and sunshine. It balances children's organisms by giving them expression in areas that are ordinarily inhibited.

It widens horizons, for here they experience an altogether different type of environment as contrasted with city life....It provides experiences in social living and an education through group relationships. In these and other ways, character can be permanently affected.¹

Girl Scouts

The first social agency to use Camp Fletcher was the Girl Scouts.

Girl Scouting has, as its fundamental aim, the development of girls along physical, mental, emotional, moral, and spiritual lines, to the end that there may result not only personally enriched individuals, but also intelligently participating citizens in a democratic social order.²

¹S. R. Slavson, Recreation and the Total Personality (New York, 1948), pp. 197-198.

²Girl Scouts, The Blue Book of Girl Scout Policies and Procedures (New York, 1944), p. 11.

This purpose is carried out for the most part by the use of small groups called troops. These troops use as meeting places natural centers of activity such as schools, churches, and housing projects. Leadership is supplied on a volunteer basis and usually found in the particular neighborhood in which the troop meets. Training of this leadership is the responsibility of the Girl Scout Staff. These training opportunities are provided at both local and national levels.¹

The program peculiar to Girl Scouts is based on the natural needs and interests of girls aged seven to seventeen. Activities include homemaking, arts and crafts, community service, vocational exploration, out-of-door living, literature, and dramatics.²

The Negro Girl Scout organization of Alabama believes that camping is one of the most effective means of accomplishing its objectives. It therefore aims to provide an inexpensive type of camping for as many Girl Scouts as possible. In order to do this, it has developed five different types of Girl Scout camps and emphasizes simple outdoor living as a camping program.³

The camping program for the Girl Scouts of Alabama began the first week in June at Camp Fletcher.

The Girl Scout Camp Committee functions as Fletcher's Camp Committee during the month of June when Girl Scouts use the camp. The committee opens camp, orders the food for most of the summer, inspects the site in pre-camp inspection, checks the equipment and recommends the replacements and repairs for each season. All this is done so that the camp may meet Girl Scout standards under which they must operate.

The Girl Scout Camp Committee for 1947 consisted of five adult Girl Scouts. This committee had four sessions of two hours each in training for their job.⁴

The first week of the camping period, from June 4 to June 11, 1947, was used as Leadership Training Week. Twenty-five adult leaders from several southern communities enrolled in this course. They were trained by the local, regional, and national Girl Scout Staff, in procedured of the Girl Scout Camping Program.

The camp period for the troops was from June 11 to July 1. Seventy-one

¹Interview with Phyllis Dews, Field Director, Girl Scouts Council, Atlanta, Georgia, June 28, 1948.

²Ibid.

³Girl Scouts, op. cit., p. 17.

⁴Letter from Mildred Johnson, op. cit., April 7, 1948.

girls enjoyed this camping experience. "A Court of Honor" composed of representatives from each unit, assisted in the planning of the program. The girls were divided into living units according to their ages, Girl Scout classification (Brownie, Girl Scouts and Senior Girl Scouts), and their interests. Each unit consisted of ten girls under a counselor who had been trained in the particular interest represented.

A Typical Day at Pauline Bray Fletcher's Camp

6:00	Rising whistle
6:15 - 6:45	Morning dip
6:45 - 7:30	Rooms cleaned
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast and cleaning of dining room and grounds
9:00 - 10:00	Supervised handicraft, folk dancing or games
10:00 - 11:00	Hiking and nature study
11:00 - 12:00	Swimming
12:00 - 2:00	Dinner, dish washing
2:00 - 3:00	Rest period
3:00 - 4:00	Reading, story-telling
4:00 - 5:00	Swimming
5:00 - 6:00	Sports, baseball, crochet, volley ball
6:00 - 7:00	Supper
7:00 - 9:00	Various programs: hiking with lanterns, dances, weiner roasts, camp fire, dramatics, variety shows
9:00	Taps ¹

Religious Training Camp

From July 1 to July 14, the camp was used as a Religious Training Camp for young Negro teen-agers. The expense was defrayed by the Women's Missionary Union (white) and the Baptist Women's State Convention (Negro) of Alabama. During the second week, the "Crusaders," a group of boys. In no instance could a camper be a married man or woman.

During the 1947 camping season, 107 girls and 73 boys attended camp.

¹ Interview with Pauline Bray Fletcher, op. cit., March 6, 1948.

'That in all things He might have the preeminence.' Col. 1:8.

1:00. . . Dinner

10:00. . . Good Night All.¹

¹Report of Baptist Young Woman's Camp, Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher, Bessemer, Alabama, July, 1947 (unpublished).

Missionary Society and were selected by the Senior Missionary Group. They had been trained in the work of the Baptist Women State Convention and before coming to camp had received the following bulletin of instructions for camp procedures:

For Camp Counselors

We are happy to have you at camp. We trust your stay will be profitable and we thank you in advance for your fine spirit of cooperation. You have an unusual privilege of knowing and helping your girls personally. Encourage each girl to enter into the spirit of the camp. If you have any difficulties, talk with the camp hostess or camp director. They will assist you in any way possible.

1. Dinner each day will be at 1:00 p.m. Supper the first evening will be at 6:00. Be ready to go into the dining room early and select a table at which you will serve as the hostess during the entire time. If there are more counselors than tables, then two or three may sit at the same table. Girls may change tables as they desire.
2. See that the girls whom you are chaperoning get to all meetings on time. Quiet after light bell at night and until rising bell is necessary. A busy day requires rest. We are using an honor point card this year. Have girls mark their points at the end of each day.
3. No one is to leave the camp without permission from the hostess or director. No one will be allowed to leave the camp during sessions. When leaving at any time, a chaperone must go along.
4. Morning inspection of rooms will be an important event. First and second places will be recognized.
5. Listen carefully to announcements concerning dressing for swimming.
6. Carry purses and valuables with you. Do not leave them in room. Instruct your girls.
7. If a girl is sick -- call the nurse -- quick! -- Mrs. Fletcher.
8. Do not come to meetings until your girls are all there. See that they are properly dressed -- slacks and shorts for recreation only. At all white state camps girls wear dresses to all meetings. We have asked the girls to do so at Fletcher.
9. Encourage the girls to take notes. They will want to report on return home.
10. Let us pray for a great spiritual blessing during these days together.
11. Pray definitely for any who are not Christians. Tactfully try to win them.
12. Listen for announcements regarding counselor's meetings.¹

In the light of the foregoing program, it would seem that the camp program of this organization tends to be authoritarian and thus hardly in line with

¹Bulletin of Women's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Alabama, 1947.
(Unpublished).

the best thinking and practices in the area of progressive camping.

Boys' Club

From July 14 to July 27 the Camp was used by the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, which is a member agency of Boys' Clubs of America.

The purpose of this club is to furnish recreation and religious training for boys. It offers a year-round program of club activities in the club house at 412 North 16th Street.

Six camp counselors for this group were chosen from the older group of club members. Two of the counselors were high school graduates, the others were high school students. The age of the campers ranged from nine to sixteen years.¹

One hundred and ten boys attended the camp session of 1947. This session was divided into two periods, one week each. The director planned the program and took as much equipment as possible to camp so that camp-life would be set up along lines similar to the club program back in Birmingham. The director, also, guided the counselors and helped with the behavior problems of the boys while at camp. Behavior problems were dealt with through conferences, counseling, and the inevitable group pressure.²

A Typical Day

6:30 - 7:45 a.m.

- A. Rising
- B. Cleaning
- C. Setting-Up Exercise
- D. Wash Up
- E. Morning Prayer

9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

- A. Group Activities
- B. Free Period
- C. Handicraft

8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

- A. Breakfast
- B. Announcements

11:30 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

- A. Prepare for Swimming
- B. Swimming
- C. Free Period

¹Interview with C. G. McGregor, Director, Boys' Club of Birmingham, Alabama, July 5, 1948.

²Ibid.

2:00 - 2:45 p.m.

- A. Dinner
- B. Announcements

4:00 - 6:30 p.m.

- A. Swimming
- B. Games
- C. Special Activities

7:30 - 8:00 p.m.

- A. Get Together
- B. Games (Quiet)

2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

- A. Rest

7:00 - 7:30 p.m.

- A. Lunch

8:30 - 9:15 p.m.

- A. Digging in
- B. Evening Prayer
- C. Lights Out - All Quiet¹

A criticism against this program would be that the camping program should have been different from that which the agency operates in the city so that the children would have been given new experiences, which are impossible for them to enjoy within the city. The program should have been so planned as to have made use of the natural setting rather than to have imported equipment used back at the agency.

Another criticism against this program was too much planning for the boys instead of planning with the boys.

4-H Club

July 28, 29, and 30, 1947 the camp was used by the 4-H club, which was a group of thirty-one campers between the ages of fourteen and twenty years, for a conference on agriculture. The counselors for this group were two men and one woman, who were agricultural experts and county demonstrators. These conferences included lectures and round table discussions on types of farm improvements such as soil conservation, planting of seeds, and rotation of crops.²

There is a dearth of material on this group because the director of the 4-H Club could not be contacted.

¹ Ibid.

² Interview with Nora Martin, Matron, Camp Fletcher, July 4, 1948.

Y-Teens

The Y-Teen group is the younger group of the Young Women's Christian Association, which includes girls aged twelve through eighteen.

The educational aim of the camp program.....is for the joyous freedom of the campers; that the chief consideration is their health, of body, mind and spirit; and that they are encouraged to think, to judge, and to make plans and carry them out.....The camp committee is seeking to establish a camp where girls may experience 'joyous freedom' and at the same time be given opportunity 'to judge, make plans, and carry them out,' it will realize that the campers must have the chance to think through, unhampered by traditional rules and regulation, all the problems that have to do with living together.¹

In order that this might be accomplished, activities such as dramatics, crafts, music, health, religious education and recreation are planned by the Y.W.C.A. camp committee to be carried out by the counselors.²

From August 4 to August 11, 1947, there were sixty-two campers from Birmingham, Florence, and Sheffield, ranging in age from eleven to eighteen years, and grouped according to their interests and ages.³

There were four counselors for this group. These counselors worked with the girls and camp committee in helping to formulate their program, which was planned in advance of the camping season.

Y-Teen Daily Camp Schedule

6:00	Get up morning exercise, clean cabins
8:00 - 9:00.	Breakfast
9:00 - 9:30.	Worship
9:30 -10:00.	Clean latrines, cabins
10:30 -11:00.	Inspection
11:00 - 1:00.	Program activities handicraft, swimming, religious education, dramatics
1:00 - 2:00.	Dinner
2:00 - 3:00.	Rest Hour
3:00 - 5:00.	Water front activities

¹Hazel Allen, Camps and Their Modern Administration (New York, 1947), p. 6.

²Interview with Julia Vann, Branch Secretary, Y.W.C.A., Birmingham, Alabama, July 14, 1948.

³Ibid.

5:00 - 6:00. Supper
 7:00 - 8:30. Night program-pajama party, talent night,
 vespers, world-fellowship, stunt night,
 weiner roast, Sunday Vespers.¹

Advanced planning is good, but the program should be flexible enough so that changes can be made to meet the needs and interest of the campers at a particular time.

Miscellaneous Camp Period

From August 11, to August 18, 1947, Camp Fletcher functioned as a camp for "miscellaneous campers," consisting of individual families who come to the camp to spend the week in the fresh air and quiet of the woods. During this period also, there were picnic groups sponsored by several churches and clubs of Birmingham.

There was no record of the number who attended the picnics, but there were thirty-three campers who stayed for the week.²

Health requirements for admittance of the campers who spent the week were the same as when the organized groups attended, and a day's schedule was so arranged by the staff in consultation with the campers as to meet the interests of the campers.³

Counselors for this group consisted of teachers (of Birmingham) and some of the older campers.⁴

Southeastern Bible School

August 18-25, 1947, the camp was used by the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel as the Southeastern Bible School for boys and girls aged eight to eighteen years. This group was first organized in 1938. Its avowed purpose

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

was the building of character through instruction in the Bible.¹

The enrollment at camp for the 1947 season was twenty-six girls and nineteen boys, who were divided into groups according to ages, sex, and achievements.²

Counselors for the groups were three women and one man, who were trained by the organization to carry out its aims and ideals.³

A Day At Camp

7:00 . . . Rise and dress	2:00 . . . Rest hour
7:30 . . . Morning Bible reading	3:00 . . . Swimming
8:00 . . . Breakfast	4:30 . . . Play
8:30 . . . Clean dining hall,	5:15 . . . Crafts or surprise
cabins	hour
9:30 . . . Morning assembly	6:15 . . . Supper
10:00 . . . Recess	7:30 . . . Evening service
10:30 . . . Group Classes	8:15 . . . Go to cabins
11:30 . . . Swimming	8:30 . . . Prayer time
1:30 . . . Dinner	9:00 . . . Quiet ⁴

This program like the program of the "Religious Training" camp is not in line with modern camp objectives, it must be borne in mind that Camp Fletcher makes its facilities available to different types of organizations--social as well as religious--and that these organizations have set up their own objectives in line with their stated purposes and functions.

¹Interview with William Fudolph, Director of the Bible Training School, Birmingham, Alabama, July 4, 1947.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Folder printed by the Gospel Chapel, Birmingham, Alabama, August, 1947 (unpublished).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher tried to meet established standards as to site, sanitation, program, health and safety. Likewise, principles of group work were kept conscientiously in sight at least by the over-all camp directorate. However, the implementation of these principles could hardly be realized independent of the various agencies utilizing the camp's facilities. Accordingly, it was found in practice that the soundness of the program at a given moment varied with the soundness of the group work philosophy of the utilizing agency.

Organized camping as we know it today is a relatively modern character building agency which received its impetus with the coming of the automobile and better roads.

Upon recognizing the needs for a camp site where the Negro Youth of Alabama might enjoy the sunshine and fresh air so necessary for health and happiness, Mrs. Pauline Bray Fletcher, in 1919, became interested in establishing a camp and encouraged the nurses of Birmingham to incorporate for this purpose under the name of the Girls' Service League.

Camp Fletcher is twelve miles southeast of Bessemer, Alabama. Here, camp activities are carried on for the benefit of organized groups serving the youth of Alabama.

Group work agencies that utilized the facilities of the camp during 1947 were (1) the Girl Scouts, (2) the Baptist Women's State Convention jointly with the State Missionary Union (white) (sponsoring a Religious Training Camp for Negro boys and girls), (3) the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, (4) the 4-H Club, (5) the Young Women's Christian Association (sponsoring a Y-Teen camp), and (6) the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel (sponsoring the Southeastern Bible School).

Each of these organizations had its own program and professional staff who carried out the purpose of the sponsors. However, they all had in common such professed aims as the building of character, making provision for the health of mind, body and spirit, and teaching the democratic way of life.

As has already been indicated, the program was not in every instance in accord with established group work objectives.

The first week of the camping period, starting June 4, was used by the Negro Girl Scouts of Alabama as Leadership Training Week. Twenty-five adult leaders from several southern communities enrolled in this course. They were trained by representatives from the local, regional, and national Girl Scout Staff in procedures of the Girl Scout Camping Program.

The camp period for the various Girl Scout troops was from June 11 to July 1. Seventy-one girls enjoyed this camping experience. A "Court of Honor," composed of representatives from each unit, planned the program, which was based on the natural needs and interests of girls aged seven to seventeen.

From July 1 to July 14, the camp was used as a Religious Training Camp for Negro youth. During this period 107 girls and 73 boys attended camp. The organizations sponsoring this session used Camp Fletcher to teach the principles of Baptist Missionary Work.

From July 14 to July 27, the camp was used by the Negro Boys' Club of Birmingham, which is a member agency of the Boys' Clubs of America. During this period, 110 boys attended the camp session, which was divided into two periods of one week each. This program was planned by the director and set up to resemble the club house in the city. This is hardly in keeping with modern trends in camping, which are to allow the campers to help plan their own program and make the program as different from the one in the city as possible.

July 28, 29, and 30, the camp was used by the Young Women's Christian Association for their Y-Teen group. There were sixty-two campers, ranging in

age from eleven to eighteen years, and grouped according to their interests and ages. The program for this group was planned in advance of the camping season by the Y.W.C.A. Camp Committee, the camp counselors, and the campers.

From August 11 to August 18, the camp was used for Miscellaneous Campers and picnic groups. The days' schedules were so arranged by the staff in consultation with the campers as to meet the interests of the groups.

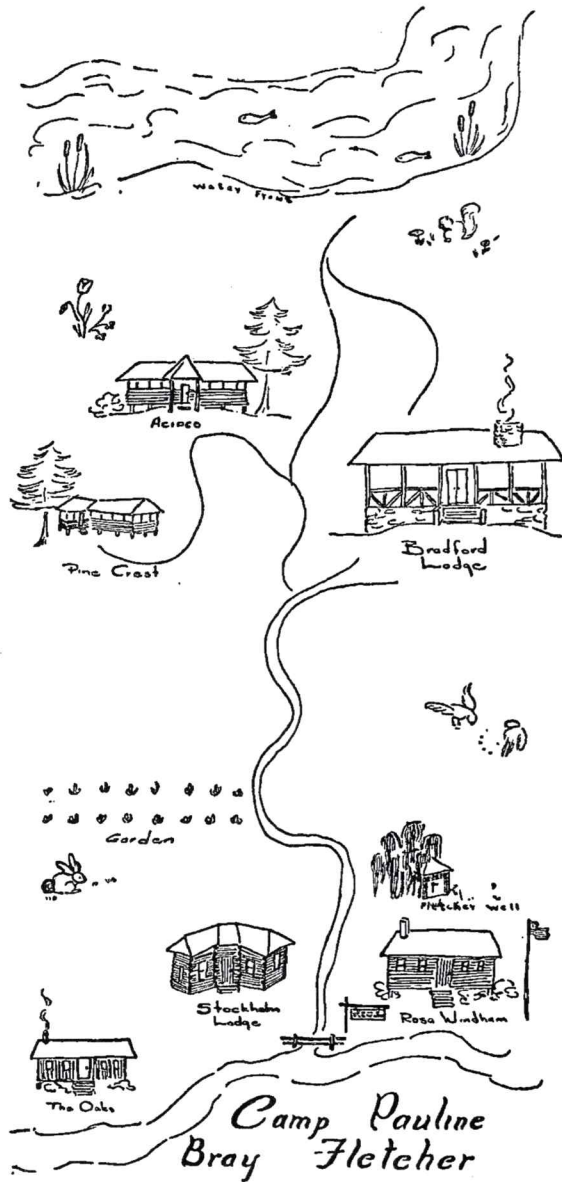
From August 18 to August 25, the camp was used by the North Birmingham Gospel Chapel as the Southeastern Bible School, for boys and girls aged eight to eighteen years. In this group there were twenty-six girls and nineteen boys, who were divided into groups according to their ages, sex, and achievements. This organization, like the organizations sponsoring the Religious Training Camp, used Camp Fletcher to teach its religious beliefs.

Camp Fletcher served over 800 campers during the year of 1947.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Map of Camp Fletcher



APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Give name of sponsoring agency _____.
2. What is the purpose of the agency? _____.
3. Give the following qualifications of the clientele served:
Age _____
Sex _____
History _____

_____.
4. What are your Health Requirements?
5. Give the following information about your counselors:
Are they trained counselors? _____
Give their qualification _____

How many campers per counselor? _____

How do counselors report on campers? _____
_____.
6. Give the following information about your camp committee:
How is the camp committee chosen? _____

When does it meet? _____
What are its duties _____
_____.
7. To what extent do campers participate in the program? _____.
8. What living arrangements do you have at camp? _____.
9. Give the average number of campers per week. _____.
10. Enclose a copy of the program of a typical day at camp.
11. Enclose a copy of a menu for a day.
12. Do you keep case records of each camper? _____ If so, are they available _____.
13. What behavior controls, rules or restrictions have you? _____

_____.
14. What agency follow-up between camp services have you? _____

_____.

APPENDIX C

A Visit of the Ku Klux Klan

Plans had been made for a bigger and better camping season for 1948 than was enjoyed in 1947. The season had opened and the agencies were preparing for their periods with much enthusiasm when on the night of June 10, 1948 a large number of automobiles bearing men dressed in the robes of the Ku Klux Klan visited the camp and ordered two white women instructors for the Girl Scout Leadership Training course to leave within twenty-four hours.

Headlines of the Birmingham News of Saturday, June 12, 1948 reported:

Hooded Band Reported Warning Instructors At Girl Scout Camp
White Women Tell of Orders to Leave Town
Pair Were Teaching Young Negro Leaders in Unit at Bessemer

An investigation was being conducted by county officers today of reports that two white women instructors were roused from their beds at a Negro Girl Scout Camp near Bessemer Thursday night by a band of robed hooded men. The men reportedly ordered the two women, Miss Katrine Nickels, 30, Birmingham, and Miss Elizabeth Ijams, 39, Knoxville, Tenn. to get out in 24 hours.

Last night Chief Deputy Sheriff Clyde Morris of the Bessemer Cutoff said his office would investigate the case thoroughly and vigorously.

The Chief Deputy said he talked this morning with some Negro residents in the camp vicinity, but 'they didn't know anything except that some cars had shown up Thursday night.' The Chief Deputy said he asked if anybody took down the license number of any of the autos. The reply was 'No sir, we didn't want to take down anything.'

Chief Morris said the camp was closed and he didn't see much possibility of developing any additional information although he was still investigating and intended to keep on trying to find who participated in the disturbance.

Howard Sullinger, circuit solicitor for the Bessemer Cutoff, said last night he was informed that an estimated 100 men wearing robes and hoods arrived at the camp, known as Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher.

Solicitor Sullinger said he had some men looking into the case today. He said he talked with Miss Nickels last night.

Possibility was seen that the federal government might enter the case. Sources close to the U. S. district attorney's office here said the federal statute relating to conspiracy to deprive a citizen of civil rights appeared to be involved in the incident.

Six or eight men entered the tent where the two women were sleeping and aroused them, they said. A spokesman for the hooded intruders said it was 'not proper' for white women to be within boundaries of a camp with Negro women. After searching their baggage and bookbags, the women said, the men told them to get out within 24 hours. They were not otherwise molested.

The course was being held under the auspices of the Memphis Regional Girl Scout Office. They were unaware of the incident until told of it late yesterday when a training was canceled.

As the defenseless women were roused from their beds by flash lights pointed at them by the hooded intruders, one of the robed men asked:

'Where's your card?'

Miss Ijams replied: 'I don't have that kind of a card.'

Apparently the question was implying the holding of a Communist Party Card.

'Don't you think you are going back on your rearing?' another man asked Miss Nickel.

'No, I don't,' she replied.

The men ransacked the girls' pocketbooks and baggage, finally took their names off the drivers' licenses in their pocketbooks.

Miss Nickels said she thought the men were in the tents about fifteen minutes. No one touched her or Miss Ijams, she said.

About 21 young Negro women were attending a special course at the camp which opened June 2. They were unaware of the incident until told of it late yesterday, when a training course was cancelled.¹

Mrs. L. E. Grothegan, Girl Scout Commissioner of Jefferson County, made the following comment:

The students in this group were all young Negro women being trained to act as camp directors and counselors for Negro Girl Scout camps throughout the South.

It is necessary to have white instructors because there are as yet no Negro workers qualified to act as instructors in this region. However, the white instructors were living in quarters to themselves, fully 100 yards from quarters of Negro groups. We feel that they were not violating southern principles and deplore this lawlessness against a group of people who were trying to help train Negro leaders to work within their own group.²

Many influential persons and organizations have been loud in their denunciation of the actions taken by this group. Among them:

The Council of Girl Scouts of Jefferson County, Inc., demanded that Sheriff Holt A. McDowell investigate the incident. The council also demanded that constituted authorities furnish protection of the Girl Scout training program in the future.³

Addressing the state convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars in Birmingham, Speaker Beck denounced the group's action as un-American and as a blow from within against our way of life.

As a result of Speaker Beck's address, a resolution urging cooperation by all V. F. W. posts with law enforcement officers in the arrest and conviction of the guilty persons was drawn for action today.⁴

¹The Birmingham News (Saturday, June 12, 1948).

²The Birmingham News-Age Herald (Sunday, June 13, 1948).

³The Birmingham News (June 14, 1948).

⁴The Birmingham Age-Herald (June 15, 1948).

Other groups and individuals who drew up resolutions were the Birmingham Methodist Pastors Association, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church, the Community Chest, and the Young Men's Business Club. Mrs. Paul Rittenhouse, New York, National Girl Scout Director, appealed to United States Attorney Tom Clark, that the members of the Masked and white-robed group be identified and brought to justice. Chief Morris said that they were investigating but to date nothing has been found out.¹

As a result of this incident, the Girl Scouts cancelled its camping period, and the number of campers for the Religious Training period was greatly decreased because parents feared that the children would not be protected. In spite of this incident, sixty-two campers of the Religious Training groups have enjoyed a week there. The directors are hoping to continue the program through the summer without any further trouble.

¹Ibid.

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- Constitution and By-Laws of Girls' Service League, Incorporated.



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 3, 2018

Camp Fire Alabama
Kayleigh Funderburk
106 Oxmore Road
Birmingham, AL 35209

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Ms. Funderburk:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that Camp Fletcher has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. A certificate indicating that the property has been added to the register will be mailed out shortly. In addition, a press release announcing this listing will soon be sent out to the appropriate news outlets.

The Alabama Register is a prestigious listing of historic, architectural, and archaeological landmarks. These selected Alabama landmarks are worthy of both recognition and preservation. Listing on the state register is an honorary designation imposing no benefits or restrictions on property owners.

The Alabama Historical Commission sponsors a historical marker and plaque program to recognize properties that contribute to the unique history of Alabama. Properties that have been listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage are eligible to purchase a historical marker through this office. Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing a marker or plaque for this historic property.

For additional information the other programs offered by the Alabama Historical Commission, please contact me or visit our website at www.ahc.alabama.gov.

The Alabama Historical Commission appreciates your efforts to preserve Alabama's historic resources. I wish you much success in all endeavors and look forward to working with you on future preservation projects.

Very truly yours,

Hannah Garmon
Architectural Survey, Alabama Register & Cemetery Preservation Coordinator
334.230.2644
Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov

CC: The Honorable Kenneth E. Gulley
Jefferson County Commission
Jefferson County Historical Association

Bessemer City Council
Jefferson County Historical Commission



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Kenneth E. Gulley
City of Bessemer
1700 3rd Avenue North
Bessemer, AL 35020

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Mayor Gulley:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

The Alabama Register is a prestigious listing of historic, architectural, and archaeological landmarks. These selected Alabama landmarks are worthy of both recognition and preservation. Listing on the state register is an honorary designation imposing no benefits or restrictions on property owners.

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468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 3, 2018

Bessemer City Council
City of Bessemer
1700 3rd Avenue North
Bessemer, AL 35020

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Council Members:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

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468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 3, 2018

Jefferson County Historical Association
P. O. Box 130285
Birmingham, Alabama 35213-0285

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Friends:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

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ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 3, 2018

Jefferson County Historical Commission
4700 7th Court South
Birmingham, Alabama 35222

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Friends:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

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Very truly yours,

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468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 3, 2018

Jefferson County Commission
716 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203-0100

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Commissioners:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

The Alabama Register is a prestigious listing of historic, architectural, and archaeological landmarks. These selected Alabama landmarks are worthy of both recognition and preservation. Listing on the state register is an honorary designation imposing no benefits or restrictions on property owners.

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Very truly yours,

Hannah Garmon
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ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 11, 2018

Camp Fire Alabama
Kayleigh Funderburk
106 Oxmore Road
Birmingham, AL 35209

RE: Camp Fletcher, 5150 Fletcher Road, McCalla, Jefferson County, Alabama

Dear Ms. Funderburk:

It is my pleasure to present to you the certificate for the above referenced property in honor of its listing in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving Alabama's historic resources.

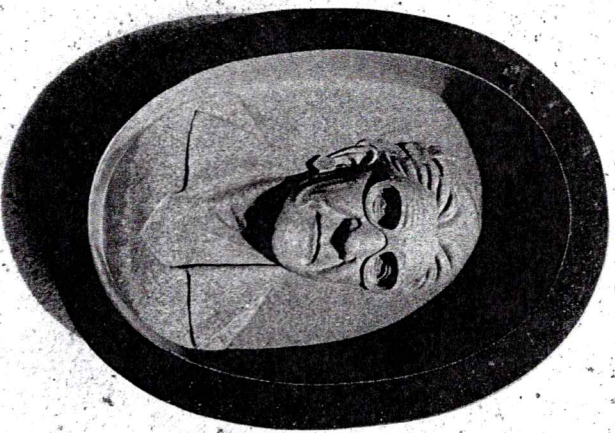
Best Regards,

Hannah Garmon
Coordinator, Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage
(334)230-2644
Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov

Enclosure

ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE

Pauline Fletcher's Relief at Kelly Ingram Park



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

CAMP FLETCHER

LOCATED IN JEFFERSON COUNTY WAS LISTED ON

MARCH 29, 2018



ALABAMA
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Kay Ivey
GOVERNOR OF ALABAMA

Jana D. Jones
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION



DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Building name: Camp Fletcher

Street address: _____

Type of Application: ☐ HRTC ☒ AR ☐ Section 106 ☐ NR ☐ Ad Valorem

For HRTC and Section 106:

- ☐ Individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
- ☐ Located in existing National Register (NR) historic district
- ☐ Contributing resource ☐ Non-contributing resource
- ☒ Individually eligible
- ☐ Contributing resource in potential NR historic district
- ☐ Not eligible for NRHP

Criteria for Evaluation:

☒ A Events/History ☒ B Persons ☒ C Architecture ☐ D Archaeology

Aspects of Integrity:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workmanship |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feeling |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Setting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Association |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intact strata |

Application:

- ☒ Sufficient physical description ☒ Sufficient description of past use/land disturbance
- ☒ Sufficient history
- ☒ Sufficient argument for meeting NRHP/ARLH criteria

Decision:

- ☐ Additional information is required to make a determination:
- ☒ This property is eligible for the NRHP/ARLH:
- ☐ This property is not eligible for the NRHP/ARLH because:

Notes:

Voting Results:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Committee Member</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chloe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collier
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hannah
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chris
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lee Anne
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stacye
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taylor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eric
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dorothy

03-29-18

Date

Hannah Heineman

AHC Signature

ALABAMA REGISTER REVIEW BOARD MEETING

March 29, 2018

10:00 am

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

NOMINATIONS

Oxford Historic District

Oxford, Calhoun County

POS 1875-1978

Criteria A: Commerce

Criteria C: Architecture

19 contributing; 7 non-contributing

Alpine Baptist Church

Alpine, Talladega County

1871

Criteria A: Religion

Criteria C: Architecture

3 contributing; 0 non-contributing

Camp Fletcher

McCalla, Jefferson County

1926

Criteria A: Ethnic Heritage

Criteria B: Pauline Fletcher

Criteria C: Architecture

9 contributing; 9 non-contributing

Fort McDermott

Spanish Fort, Baldwin County

1864

Criteria A: Military History

Criteria D: Archeology

1 contributing; 0 non-contributing

Elba Theatre

Elba, Coffee County

1933; 1946; & 1953

Criteria A: Social History; Theater

1 contributing; 0 non-contributing

Reeves Grove Baptist Church & Cemetery

Steele, St. Clair County

1872

Criteria A: Religion; Funerary Art

Criteria C: Architecture

2 contributing; 0 non-contributing

Hardy Homeplace

West Greene, Greene County

1886

Criteria A: Agriculture

Criteria C: Architecture

3 contributing; 0 non-contributing

Pine Flat Presbyterian Church & Cemetery

Deatsville, Autauga County

1871

Criteria A: Religion; Funerary Art

Criteria C: Architecture

2 contributing; 0 non-contributing

Buck Creek Jail & Water Tower

Alabaster, Shelby County

1896 & 1916

Criteria A: Industry

Criteria C: Architecture

2 contributing; 0 non-contributing

OTHER BUSINESS AS NEEDED

ADJOURNMENT

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

“Where the Green Grass Grows”

Camp Fletcher stands the test of time.

By Cherri Ellis

In Bessemer, Alabama, four and a half miles off Highway 459 at Exit 1, there is a plot of land that is oddly untouched by time. Water cuts through its rolling greenery; the trees are so old and so tall that it feels like it's higher than it is wide, though it claims 280 sprawling acres. To come onto the property, you must pass under a wooden sign that reads “Wohelo,” and if you hear anything, it's the sound of nature talking to itself. This is Camp Fletcher, and it is here today because a young black woman named Pauline Fletcher just wouldn't listen.

In 1926, Birmingham was a relatively new town. Just 55 years old, it was a city literally built on its own dirt. Unlike anywhere else on the planet, the Magic City's soil was rich with all of the ingredients to make pig iron, and since the area conveniently sat at the intersection of the country's two largest railroads, the pig iron was easily shipped out. While Birmingham's soil was rich, its working class was not. Both black and white laborers were desperately poor, and tuberculosis was rampant.

When Pauline Bray Fletcher decided that she wanted to be a registered nurse, the closest training she could get was out of state. When her father died in the middle of her schooling, she had to go home and pick cotton long enough to earn the money to return. She completed her education and began working, becoming the first African-American registered nurse in the state of Alabama. By the age of 28, she was the county nurse for the Anti Tuberculosis Association, where she helped her white boss, Miss Bertha Clements, found “Kiddie Camp” on Shades Mountain. The act of camping as a concept was relatively new—being outdoors meant hardship and work, and getting wet was considered unhealthy.

Fletcher, undeterred by the lack of precedent or funding, decided to start a camp for the area's underprivileged negro children so that they too could reap the benefits of sunshine, fresh air, and nature. With the help of the Association of Nurses and a Service League committee, Fletcher raised \$2,000, an astronomical sum of money for a young, widowed, black woman to commandeer in that day. She bought a large, beautiful plot of land and then personally solicited every lumber yard in the area. Before long, there were six neatly constructed screened huts sitting on land that had trees with pinecones the size of pineapples and rock-bedded Big Shade Creek for swimming. There was an improvised shower system made of up-ended logs and a five-gallon sprinkler with water heated over an open fire. There were clean latrines and there was a dining room that seated 110 hungry little campers. There was a kitchen that had no electricity or gas, but boasted a cooking range and an icebox that held 600 pounds of ice. There was a daily activity schedule that started at six in the morning and finished by kerosene lamp at nine each night.

Although the name wasn't officially changed until much later, that summer, Camp Fletcher was born.

Money was a constant struggle, and at one point, the twice-widowed Fletcher mortgaged and then lost her own home in her efforts to stay afloat. She was very blunt and unafraid to ask anyone of any race for a donation. She once wrote to the chair of the American Cast Iron Pipe Company and told him that she wasn't interested in his prayers for her campers—she was interested in the check he had promised.

Through her vision and dogged determination, the camp flourished for 21 years. Then, in 1947, the Ku Klux Klan came calling. For a week, there had been two white counselors training a new chapter of black Girl Scout leaders, one of whom was a young woman named Mildred Johnson. (Interestingly, Johnson's daughter Alma grew up to marry General Colin Powell.) As the young women slept, some 100 robed and hooded members of the KKK surrounded the white counselors' tent. They woke them with flashlights and ransacked their bags, demanding to see their Communist Party cards and telling them to be gone within 24 hours or else. The KKK, a perfectly legal civil group, filed a report citing that the raid was necessary because the women were using the same dining and restroom facilities at the same time, and, even worse, they were shopping for supplies in town arm-in-arm—as if they were friends.

In a beautiful turn of events, the raid massively backfired. The outrage went national almost immediately, jointly spurred on by the Girl Scouts of America and one local Jewish attorney named Abe Berkowitz, who refused to let the story die. Local Klansmen were confused; they routinely committed far more violent acts that had gone completely unchecked. After all, most elected officials and policemen were KKK members themselves.

But this is a story about our city galvanizing. The people of Birmingham said, “No,” and the rest of the country echoed it back en masse. Within a year, Alabama managed to do something that both Florida and Tennessee had attempted unsuccessfully. By an overwhelming majority vote, Alabama passed The Anti Masking Law, making it a punishable crime to conceal your identity while intimidating others. Though the battle for equality raged on for many years to follow, all transition starts somewhere. And in the middle of the night in 1947, it began at Camp Fletcher.

The arching sign at the entrance to Camp Fletcher today reads “Wohelo,” a word that means work, health, and love. In its 88 years of existence, everything around the camp has changed except the camp itself.

Kids of all ages and ethnicities and school systems still come together and get to know each other as they get to know themselves. You can't punch keys on a cell phone when you're in a canoe and the river is running high. You can't stare at a computer screen when you're aiming a bow and arrow. Hot, sweaty skin breaking the surface of cold pool water will always elicit the same rush. There is still freedom and self-discovery to be found between the patches of sun and shade in the woods, and that's likely something that will never change.

But Pauline Bray Fletcher knew that.

AHC Staff Alabama Register Checklist

Date Received: 02-20-18

Building name: Camp Fletcher

Street address: 5150 Fletcher Rd

County: Jefferson

Application Contains:

- ☒ Property information
- ☒ Floor plan & Site plan
- ☒ Physical description
- ☒ History
- ☒ Bibliography and geographical data
- ☐ Photographs

Category: ☐ Building ☒ District ☐ Structure ☐ Site ☐ Object

Date of Construction: 1926

Alteration Date: multiple

Significance: ☒ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> funerary art	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Comments:

- 8 contributing structures
- need pictures of pool + pool house

AHC Reviewer: Hannah Johnson Date: 02-21-18